

Student/Parent Handbook 2022-2023

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WHERE FUN AND LEARNING MEET!
École St. Mary School

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Welcome to École St. Mary School! Bienvenue À L'École St. Mary!

This parent/student handbook includes information to help you better understand our school policies and procedures. It includes information that will be helpful during your time in our school community. Please take some time to read it over and refer to it when necessary.

Welcome to the 2022/2023 school year at Ecole St. Mary.

It is our goal to provide the children who attend our school with the best possible Catholic Education. With the Gospel values permeated into the daily life of our school, we will make every effort to support our students in achieving academic and social success.

We encourage our students to take full advantage of their time at Ecole St. Mary. Get to know the staff, try your best, participate in co-curricular activities, and forge great friendships. Actively participating in the school community will make your time here successful and memorable.

We recognize our parents/guardians as the first educators of their children. Our students will benefit from a direct and open line of communication between the school and the home. Please do not hesitate to contact us directly with questions or concerns. We promise to do the same for you.

As we enter the 2022/2023 school year together, may the light of Christ guide you in all that you do.

VISION STATEMENT:

Ecole St. Mary is a Christ-centered learning community dedicated to the growth of each child in a caring and respectful Catholic environment.

WHAT WE VALUE:

At Ecole St. Mary we value all God's children.
At Ecole St. Mary we value continual improvement for all.
At Ecole St. Mary we value the Gospel message.
At Ecole St. Mary we value excellence in teaching.
At Ecole St. Mary we value our collaborative community.
At Ecole St. Mary we value basic human needs.
At Ecole St. Mary we value a safe and caring environment.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Zones Philosophy: Zones were created in order to designate entrances and exits to specific classes from the same areas of the school. Zones were created with proximity in mind. A child's zone door is to be their entrance and exit at all times during the day, except in the case of fire, fire drill or emergency evacuation. If a student is late for school, they must report to the office.

Zone 1 Entrance by Office (classes are from the upstairs hallway)

1KI 2MI 3DI 1DI 5BI

Zone 2 Entrance by Kindergarten and park (main level hallway)

3ME 1/2RE 4NE 6RE 4CI

Zone 3 by Gym, North Entrance (downstairs and additional classes from middle of school)

5SE 6MI 2/3P-SI 2GE 4/5GI

Kindergarten:

Kindergarten Classes have their own entrances via their outdoor classroom door that the kindergarten students will use to enter and exit.

Recess Plan, Groups

From a school perspective, we have also adopted the attitude that we are going to start conservatively: we will still have students entering and exiting from a zone-specific door, we have changed the recess and lunch times to lessen the amount of interaction, and have decided that we will still designate a specific playing area for each of the grades when they are outside. Teachers will remain in the classroom while their students eat, and we have designated times for nutrition breaks and clean-up.

Recess 1– 30 minutes

Lunch (eat)- 30 minutes supervised by their teacher

Recess 2 (play)- 30 minutes

Each class is welcome to have a Nutrition Break or Daily Physical Activity at any time throughout the day if the current schedule does not meet all nutrition and movement needs.

**** Z1= Zone 1 Z2= Zone 2 Z3= Zone 3 ****

Division 1: 1KI (Z1) 1/2RE (Z2) 1DI (Z1) 2/3P-SI (Z3) 2MI (Z1) 2GE (Z3)

3ME(Z2) 3DI(Z1)

Recess 1: 9:40 - 10:10

Lunch: 12:10-12:40

Recess 2: 12:40 –1:10

Division 2: 4NE (Z2) 4CI (Z2) 4/5GI (Z3) 5SE (Z3) 5BI (Z1) 6MI (Z3) 6RE (Z2)

Recess 1: 10:10 -10:40

Recess 2: 12:10 -12:40

Lunch: 12:40 -1:10

GENERAL PROGRAMS

École St. Mary provides a sound academic education in both English and French Immersion in accordance with the requirements of Alberta Education and the Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Separate School Division. This includes a comprehensive religious education program. In addition, there exists a multitude of other programs to benefit the students.

The Religion Program

We are a Catholic Faith Community dedicated to providing each student entrusted to our care with an education rooted in the Good News of Jesus Christ. Guided by the Holy Spirit, in partnership with home, parish and society, our schools foster the growth of responsible citizens who will live, celebrate and proclaim their faith. Our Catholic Faith is the foundation of all that we do. As we are a Catholic School, we provide daily religious studies classes for our students and we assist local parishes in preparing students for the sacraments of First Eucharist, First Reconciliation and Confirmation. Prayer is an important part of our school life and we have many liturgical celebrations throughout the year. All students who attend our school are expected to participate in all faith-based activities. Parents are a vital part of our school community and are always welcome to attend these celebrations.

The Academic Program

English and French Immersion Program: Ecole St. Mary offers an English program as well as a French Immersion program for Kindergarten to Grade 6 students. In both cases, the program of studies from Alberta Education, guides instruction. The French Immersion Program is essentially an alternative education program available to families from across the city. The main concept is to “immerse” the child in the French language during the school day. Formal English Language Arts skills are introduced in Grade 3. Students in Grades 1 and 2 receive 100% of their instruction in French and students in Grades 3 to 6 receive approximately 85% of their instruction in French. French Immersion permits the child to become bilingual at a time in life when language is assimilated easily. Currently, the program extends from Kindergarten to Grade 12, with Grades 7 - 9 at St. Francis Junior High and Grades 10 - 12 at Catholic Central High School.

Homework: We also encourage students to read a minimum of 15 minutes per evening. This helps to reinforce the concepts taught at school. Please check your child’s AGENDA (Grade 1 to 6) daily for additional work that may be assigned at the teacher’s discretion.

Agenda: Each student in Grades 1 to 6 will receive an Agenda to be used on a daily basis as a communication tool between home and school. This can include messages from the home to the teacher as well as messages from the teacher to home. Ensure that you read through the school pages in the front with your child and that both of you sign the “Ecole St. Mary Code of Ethics” and the “Elementary School Student Technology Responsible Use Agreement” within the first week of the school year.

The Social Program

Sports and Clubs: Ecole St. Mary offers a variety of intramural sports and co-curricular clubs throughout the year which students are encouraged to participate. Refer to monthly newsletters for activities that are being offered.

Volunteers: Parents and guardians are welcome to volunteer at the school for various activities. Ecole St. Mary has been blessed with good participation from parents and community members. Volunteers are a vital part of the school and are greatly appreciated. To assist us in keeping our students safe, anyone volunteering must sign in at the office. This is very important to the security of our school and safety of our children. If you would like to volunteer, please contact the school office. As of April 1, 2012 Volunteer drivers must present an up-to-date Driver's Abstract and have completed a Drivers Authorization Form and show proof of insurance before driving a student.

Please see the school office for more information. Volunteers who will be spending time with students are expected to have a Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Search completed. Please see the school office for more information. Please Contact the school directly for the most up-to-date covid guidelines/requirements

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Because it is important for all students to achieve success, we offer support services in a number of different areas.

Inclusive Education Liaison: The Inclusive Education Liaison works with parents and the classroom teacher to provide necessary supports for students, as needed. Support is also provided in Language Arts, Early Literacy and English Language Learning (ELL/ESL).

Educational Assistants: These staff members support teachers to meet individual student needs and create an inclusive classroom environment. Some educational assistants work with small groups of students in specially designed programs such as Early Literacy and English as a Second Language.

School Counselor: The school has a Counselor who is at the school at various times throughout the week to provide support to students on a referral basis. Consent must be given from the parent/guardian prior to the counselor seeing a student. The Counselor can work with individuals and small groups of students. She works primarily with social, emotional and behavior concerns.

Family First Facilitator: Hired by the School Division the position is designed to use a preventive/early intervention model to enable children, youth and families to acquire the skills and knowledge required for individuals to build on their strengths, address challenges, cope with adversity and increase their capacity to care for themselves and others. By building universal supports that proactively provide families access to support systems, knowledge of child development, trusting relationships and problem solving skills families are more likely to be healthy and thrive. Families involved with this project will develop advocacy skills to access supports in times of need

First Nations, Metis & Inuit Support Worker: The First Nations, Métis and Inuit Support Workers are critical members of the learning teams in many of our schools. Their main duties are:

Responding to Student Needs.

Supporting teachers' integration of First Nations, Metis and Inuit context and content in all classroom learning.

Supporting Blackfoot Language.

Contributes their knowledge and expertise to provide school programming.

Facilitating Relationships.

Helps link families to community supports.

Facilitates opportunities for families to be involved with school.

Networks with community agencies, including First Nations, Metis and Inuit community.

Facilitates opportunities for Elders to work with staff, students, and families.

Youth Engagement Officer – YEO

As the name implies, the Youth Engagement Unit (YEU) will take an analytical, directed, and proactive approach to identify, engage, and intervene with youths who either are, or who may engage, in criminal and/or harmful behaviors and help them develop into successful and law-abiding citizens.

The YEO will focus on providing outreach in the forms of early intervention, positive mentorship, recommending support services, building positive relationships, and keeping young offenders out of the criminal justice system through diversionary programs where appropriate and where legislated. Circumstances at times may dictate that criminal charges are warranted but the overall focus of the YEO is diversion as per the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

SCHOOL SERVICES

Fees: The School District charges an annual fee for the necessary textbooks and some other resource materials needed for classroom instruction. Should a student lose or damage a text, parents will be requested to reimburse the school. We ask that you pay these fees at the office on or before September 30, 2022. Payments are now to be made via SCHOOL CASH-ONLINE (See office for instructions on how to use our School's CASH-ONLINE system of receiving payments).

Currently, school fees are set at \$15.00. These fees should be paid by September 30, 2022 via School Cash Online. Additionally, Kindergarten Field Trip fees are \$50.00. *These fees are subject to change based upon circumstances surrounding COVID. Currently the Division has restrictions surrounding extracurricular activities and field trips – please refer to the Holy Spirit website or contact the school directly.

Library/Media Centre: Our school is proud to offer a 21st Century Library/Media Centre to our school community. You can now access our school library's collections online through our school website. Students access the Library/Media Centre during regularly scheduled visits as well as various times throughout the week. The development of literacy skills is supported through print material (both fiction and non-fiction), online content, iPads, notebook computers and other tools that engage today's learner. Our philosophy is that 21st century literacy must be developed through important competencies such as collaboration, inquiry, self-direction, communication, creativity, and cultural and global awareness. Parents are welcome to visit our Library/Media Centre at any time throughout the year.

Lockers: All students are issued lockers at the beginning of the school year. Combination locks are optional for all students in Grades 4 to 6. Students are required to provide their own locks.

Lost and Found: All items of clothing, footwear, lunch boxes, etc., must be clearly marked with your child's name so they can be easily identified. Electronic games, iPods, phones and any other expensive items should not be brought to school. The Lost and Found Box is located in the gym foyer. Other lost and found items such as jewelry, watches, locks, etc. are brought to the office. Clothing and other items that are unclaimed at the end of each year are given to charities, so please check the lost and found boxes often.

Before and After School Supervision: Children are supervised during the school day beginning at 7:45a.m. and after dismissal till 3:10p.m. Monday to Thursday and on Friday until 12:40p.m. If your children are at the school outside of these times, parents are required to supervise them.

Nutrition Program: Ecole Saint Mary has been lucky to enter into a relationship with Mindful Munchies who will provide pre-made sandwiches and a variety of snacks to the school twice a week. These will be made available upon request from students or parents. We also have a breakfast program to provide food when the students first arrive at school.

School Pictures: Individual and class photos are taken in the early part of the school year. Parents are under no obligation to purchase the photos. This year's picture day will be held the morning of _____ and picture re-take day will be on _____. Two photo proofs of your child will be taken and sent home within a week. The new order form will be done directly through the company.

School Bus Updates for the 2022/2023 School Year: Our School busses are provided by Southland Transportation. Alongside our partners, we have been working diligently during this unprecedented and challenging time to follow the direction of the Alberta Government, Alberta Education and Alberta Health Services, taking the necessary precautions to safeguard the well-being of our students and drivers when buses start running this fall.

No Fee-Paying riders are those who reside 2.4 kilometres or further from their designated school. Fee-Paying riders are those who reside between 1.24-2.39 kilometres and choose to pay to ride the bus.

Transportation Registration forms are assigned to students at the beginning of the school year and must be filled out by parents/guardians before entry on the bus is permitted.

While there is no way to eliminate all risk, and physical distancing on a school bus is extremely difficult, the following health and safety protocols will be implemented on buses to COVID-19 transmission:

-Children/students should not board the bus if they have symptoms of COVID-19. Be sure to use the self-screening questionnaire each day prior to leaving for the bus.

-All students must wear a face mask prior to entering the school bus and must keep the mask on during the ride and at bus transfer sites. Bus drivers will have a very limited number of disposable masks to hand out if necessary.

-It is recommended that students bring their own hand sanitizer, as the supply cannot be guaranteed by the bus.

-It is recommended parents or guardians monitor students with physical distancing and use of face masks while waiting for the bus.

-After the first few days of riding the bus, students will be assigned their seats. Where possible buses will be loaded back to front, and siblings will be seated together.

-All bus drivers will be cleaning the school bus after each bus run, both morning and afternoon, with an approved cleaning product as per Alberta Health Services guidelines.

-Drivers will also be wearing a mask and or face shield when loading and unloading the school bus. They may remove their mask when the bus is in motion for proper visibility. The drivers will do everything they can to ensure compliance and will encourage students to use their face masks and keep their hands to themselves. The driver's first priority is on-the-road safety.

-Students who are not following the rules will be referred to the school principal and may lose the privilege of riding.

-Currently, we have a shortage of substitute bus drivers, and there may be times when a driver is ill, and the route cannot run. We, and Southland, will notify parents as early as possible. However, in some circumstance you may receive very short notice. Following Alberta Health Services direction, drivers may be absent for extended periods and routes may not be available.

COMMUNICATION

Changes at Home: Keeping our files updated is essential for continued communication between school and home. If either parent changes place of employment, address, telephone number, or if there has been a change in the emergency contact person and his/her phone numbers, please let us know as soon as possible so we can update our files. It is important that contact numbers and emergency numbers are up to date. In the event of an emergency with your child, the school cannot act on any medical attention without your consent. Please contact your child's classroom teacher if anything arises which may affect your child's learning.

Messages for Students: We ask that you make any alternate after school arrangements prior to your child's arrival at school. Please call the school BEFORE 2:00 p.m. if you must leave a message.

Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting of Student Achievement: Evaluation of student progress is continuous throughout the year. This year before the first Report Card is issued we have set aside the week of October 26-28 in the evenings for a goal setting with student/parent/teacher. There will also be another evening set aside to revisit the goals, sometime in February of 2021. If parents are unable to attend the scheduled parent-teacher conferences, they are encouraged to contact their child's teacher to make other arrangements. Communication between the home and school is vital to the child's success.

Final progress reports are issued on the last day of school. Those students who will be leaving for holidays before the end of the school year will have their report cards mailed to them at the end of June.

Monthly Newsletter/Calendar: Our monthly Newsletter is now published on our website: esm.holyspirit.ab.ca under Resources & Publications, Newsletter. You may read the newsletter

online or sign up to receive it by email, (on our homepage; locate the box on the right side labeled “Newsletter Signup” where your home email address will be entered. After entering your email address click on ‘Go’ and you will receive the newsletter every month.)

Ecole St. Mary School Council: The Ecole St. Mary School Council is an advisory body, committed to supporting, financially and otherwise, decisions and activities which benefit all of our students. The School Council welcomes all parents and guardians in our school community as members. All are encouraged to attend the monthly meetings. Your input and suggestions are important. Some of the fundraising activities that School Council has spearheaded have included a Major Fundraiser, Labour of Love Lunches, and School Carnival. School Council has generously donated money to the classroom field trips, Sports Day lunch and refreshments, and the purchase of items for the school.

Visitors: In the past we have encouraged an open door policy to allow parents to visit the school. We ask that all visitors call to make an appointment if possible. Visitors must check in at the office to sign in and sign out.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Classroom Expectations: The teacher is the instructional leader in the classroom. He or she is responsible for establishing, in conjunction with the students, a set of classroom rules and procedures that promote responsibility and self-direction.

General Behaviour:

Students will: a) Show consideration and courtesy towards others at all times. b) Treat all school and personal property with care and respect. c) Use appropriate language and gestures when communicating to others. d) Observe all classroom rules as laid down by the teacher and students of that particular classroom. e) Walk in an orderly and safe manner while in school and at all school related activities. f) Dress in accordance with the school code. g) Abstain from the use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco while on school property.

The School Act outlines student responsibilities as follows: *The student shall conduct himself so as to reasonably comply with the following code of conduct:* a) Be diligent in pursuing his/her studies; b) Attend school regularly and punctually; c) Cooperate fully with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services; d) Comply with the rules of the school; e) Account to his teachers for his conduct; f) Respect the rights of others.”

Attendance: Our school’s attendance policy states that “Good attendance is one way to ensure your children have the chance at success they deserve.” The curriculum, as set out by Alberta Education, works on the idea that each grade adds the necessary foundations that ensure success at the next level. If attendance is poor, the student’s chances of success are not as great. **Give your child the opportunity to become the best they can be by making sure he/she is at school every day on time.** This policy details that success in school requires consistent attendance. Chronic absences and tardiness place children at risk! These children fall behind in their work, feel overwhelmed, lose contact with teachers and peers, suffer low self-esteem due to repeated failure, and are at high risk of dropping out. We cannot stress the importance of having your child here on a regular basis and at the beginning of the school day. If your child is absent

from school, please contact the office that morning (403-327-3098) so that he/she may be excused. If we do not hear from you, the office staff will attempt to contact the parent, guardian or emergency contact to confirm that the student is accounted for. The Administration of the school is informed when there is no contact made with the parent, guardian or emergency contact. **Students who arrive late** at the school must report to the office in order to be marked as present. Parents who are picking up their child at any time throughout the day are asked to first sign them out at the office.

Bus Safety and Behavior: *Students are to comply with the standards for behavior as set out by Lethbridge Transit and Holy Spirit Catholic School Division.* a) Students are to respect the rules as set by the bus driver. b) Students are to remain seated while the bus is in motion. c) Students are to keep all objects, and their head and arms, inside the bus. d) Open beverage containers and eating are not permitted on regular bus runs.

A student's failure to comply with the set standards for behavior may result in suspension of bus service ranging from one day to a complete loss of privileges to ride school buses.

Dress Code: Student apparel must meet the following guidelines:

- a) No tops with spaghetti straps.
- b) No bare midriffs.
- c) Shorts must be at least mid-thigh in length. No short shorts.
- d) No clothing with obscene images, language, gestures or bullying.
- e) Shirts and shoes are required at all times.

Bicycles: Students using their bicycles for transportation to and from school should supply a lock and use the provided bike racks to store their bicycles during school hours. Students are not allowed to ride their bikes at anytime on the school grounds. École St. Mary is not responsible for damaged or stolen bicycles.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

When Students Become ill at School: The office staff will attempt to contact the parents, guardians and/or emergency contacts to relay information and coordinate a pick-up time for students who have become ill during the course of the school day.

Medication: As per school board policy, staff is not allowed to administer any form of medication without proper documentation. If parents cannot arrange to administer medication at home, they are asked to come to the office to obtain the appropriate forms which need to be filled out and signed by a physician and parent. Medication cannot be administered until these completed forms have been returned to the school office. Each time the dosage or medication is changed, and also at the beginning of each school year a new set of forms must be completed by the parent/guardian.

School Nurse: The School nurse is a Public Health Nurse employed by the Chinook Health Region. She or he provides Ecole St. Mary with immunizations, addresses student's health concerns, and provides health resources to the staff. The health nurse is an important part of our school community. Contact with the school nurse can be made at the Lethbridge Health Unit, 403-382-6666.

Lice: It is recommended that parents do a "lice check" on their school-aged children approximately once a week. If parents have concerns or need assistance, they should phone the Lethbridge Health Unit at 403-382-6666.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency School Closures: Should an emergency closure of school occur, the Superintendent of Schools will contact radio and television broadcasters to announce to the community the decision and the reason for the closure. This will also be posted on the Holy Spirit School Division Website.

Emergency Telephone Number: In an emergency, the school always tries to reach parents/guardians first. However, there are times when this is not possible. Therefore, the school must have the names and current phone numbers for two individuals (other than the parent/guardian) who can be reached by phone. Please keep the school office updated with changes.

Fire Drills: Fire drills are held periodically throughout the year. For this reason, students must wear footwear during school hours. All visitors to the school must participate in fire drills.

Lockdown: Lockdown drills take place at least once every school year. Teachers review these procedures with their students and the reasons why it is necessary to practice them.